

George Santayana's Theory of Knowledge

by

MARTEN TEN HOOR

Instructor in Philosophy at the University of Illinois

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I. THE LEAP OF INTUITION AND THE LEAP OF FAITH

BY far the most complete and important statement of Mr. Santayana's epistemological beliefs is contained in his recent essay, "Three Proofs of Realism."¹ The principal distinction made here is that which critical realists claim as their particular contribution. It might be described as an interposition of a transitive medium between the idea and its object. The three persons of this epistemological trinity, then, are the external object; the symbol of this object actually given in sense or in thought, that is, the datum; and the mental state of awareness or consciousness of this sense-datum, what might be paraphrased as the appreciation of it. It is obvious that the naïve realistic definition of knowledge as the direct intuition of the object is insufficient and quite unsuited to explain this process. In a certain sense, the ultimate conclusion is the same, namely, that external realities exist independently of thought and that such existence can be defended and satisfactorily explained; and it must also be apparent that the ultimate ground of critical realism suggests quite the same confidence in such independent existence. The difference is principally one of technique: the two views differ in their explanations of the knowledge process; critical realism, as the name implies, claims to be less intuitive and more critical in its exposition. Whereas naïve realism feels that we cross the chasm between idea and object in one leap, the critical realist has not this high acrobatic confidence and feels the need of an extra leap. "Transitiveness in knowledge," says Santayana, "has two stages or leaps: the leap of intuition, from the state of the living organism to the consciousness of some essence; and the leap of faith or action, from the symbol actually given in sense or in thought to some ulterior existing object."² The first problem suggested here concerns the definition of these two stages or leaps, which in turn implies a clear conception of the respective points of departure and arrival. The second question is the more fundamental one, to wit, whether the description of the knowledge proc-

¹ In *Essays in Critical Realism*.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 183.

ess as developed by Santayana makes necessary and inevitable the assumption that external facts exist independently of experience.

Viewed from the standpoint which Santayana assumes, the transitiveness of knowledge involves both the identification and the independence of substance and appearance. They are independent only in an abstract sense; since the world is what it is, it is apparent that the genesis of appearance had to follow from the nature of substance. To express this in his own terminology, the flux of appearance, the Personal Flux, which is the flux of mind, was bound to arise in the Absolute Flux, the flux of nature. It is evident that Santayana does not mean here that the Personal Flux is a part of the Absolute Flux in an idealistic or pantheistic sense. He says clearly on page 167 of this essay that appearance arose as a result of "changes of structure," which can mean nothing else but that the flux of appearance is merely a phase of the flux of nature. Now how does this "appearance" differ from "change"? And what is the exact relation involved? "Appearance" is merely a particular form of change which we describe as "mind." Just as a mind is born in a baby, so appearance is the product of changes of structure in the world. Now it is to be noted here that already in the external world change is distinguished from structure, even as the mind is distinguished from the body. Change is ascribed to reality. In the individual mind we find merely a phase of it. Behind change in the Absolute Flux there is substance.

It follows, then, that appearance and substance can not be existentially identified, even if they "exist" in the same world. Identification is here a matter of essence, not existence. "... it is not his knowledge or his mind that the naïve realist identifies with the object, but only the essence immediately intuited by him that he identifies with its essence."³ This can mean nothing other than that here we must distinguish two "essences," an essence intuited and an essence embodied. Santayana explains this further: "It [the essence] may now have the ideal status of an object of intuition and again the material status of the form of a thing." In a footnote he defines essence as "a universal, of any degree or complexity which may be given immediately, whether to sense or to thought."⁴ The issue now becomes clear. Since knowledge is always a "salutation" and never an "embrace," the essence as intuited by thought can not be existentially identified with the object. Since an "essence can also be given immediately to sense," the same reservation must be made here. In what sense, then, can an "essence," a universal, be embodied in an object? It must be

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 167.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 168.

apparent that the term "embodies" can mean nothing except "ascribed to," and then it follows that our concern is with appearance and not with substance. To "ascribe to" for the critical realist can mean nothing else but that an idea is referred to a datum, and then the problem of knowledge is merely a matter of discovering the connection between "ideas" and "data," between thought and appearance rather than between appearance and substance.

But Santayana does not mean to have the transitivity of knowledge thus limited and he meets this objection by insisting that both transcendence and relevance establish the truth of the realistic assumption. He acknowledges, however, that these are "*instinctive* assumptions necessary to the validity of knowledge."⁵ Transcendence, for example, can mean nothing if the thinker can not escape from the subjective circle of his opinions. If knowledge does not refer to something outside of itself, it can be nothing but an idle dream. Nor could it be relevant. It is interesting to note here that for the moment one instance of escape from subjectivity, the distinction between idea and datum, is lost sight of. This kind of transitivity is not sufficient, although even Santayana does not deny that all our knowledge of the sensible world is given to us in terms of "sense data."

This sudden extension of transcendence to something beyond the sense data is most clearly brought out in the distinction made by Santayana between concretions in discourse and concretions in existence. Instead of the qualities of an object being derived from an actually conceived object, the object is constructed out of concretions in discourse, that is, out of universals derived from repeated sensations. These universals are frankly recognized as ideas, for in *Reason in Science* they are referred to as "imposing upon the flux . . . what we call ideas . . . terms employed in thought and language."⁶ Then "concretions in existence," which are combinations of such universals, are seen to represent external and independent existences. And on what grounds? Some answer is contained in the assertion that a "permanent sensation helps to disclose a permanent object."⁷ Now, first of all, by the very definition of the flux, no sensation is permanent and certainly is never assigned permanent existence in the outside world. The confusion here results from the persistent "*instinctive assumption*" referred to above: the terms "datum" and "object" are identified with the persistence of a naïve realist. This same confusion of terms is implied in the statement, "Existence reveals

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 168.

⁶ *Reason in Science*, p. 28.

⁷ *Reason in Common Sense*, p. 130.

reality when the flux discloses something permanent that dominates it."⁸ Should not this be revised to read: "*Experience* reveals reality when the flux discloses something permanent which dominates it"? In short, what Santayana sets out to prove, it seems to me, is persistently assumed as already proved.

A particularly suggestive discussion of the datum, the middle term of Santayana's epistemological trinity, is contained in the aforementioned essay. The datum is here defined as purely mental: "... the datum lies wholly in its own category."⁹ It is an object of immediate intuition "without conditions, seat, or environment."¹⁰ Existence can not be predicated of it in the sense that existence is predicated of material things. Nor is it a state of mind. It is an *ideal essence*. It is this essence which is intuited and it is this intuition which makes ideal contemplation thoroughly realistic.

Now there are several interesting points to be noted here. First of all, the term "realistic" is given an unusual connotation, for no "real" reality is intuited; no object is intuited, only an ideal essence. Such a realistic conception might very well be accepted by the idealists. Secondly, just what are we to understand by this "essence" which is used synonymously with "datum"? It is ideal, therefore it is no object of experience as such, but merely an object of thought. Is it a concretion in discourse or a condition of such a concretion? It must be more than a mere sense-datum to be a concretion, for genetically, a concretion is something having ideal permanence, evolved from the flux of appearance, that is, from a series of sensations; and an essence is defined as being a universal. Is there then a fourth term, the sense-datum which is referred to an "essence" before it is intuited, that is, given dignity as a valid bit of knowledge? This is unlikely in view of the assertion that we are concerned here merely with "the leap of intuition, from the state of a living organism to the consciousness of some essence."

The term "state of a living organism" can not very well be interpreted genetically and psychologically as referring to an organic disturbance which somehow ends in the first stage of knowledge, namely, the consciousness of some essence, in accordance with the accepted psychological explanation that the process goes from sensation to perception. I take this to mean that ideas or essences are generated automatically in the flux of the mind, that is, that they are products of organic processes and only in the second instance

⁸ *Idem*, p. 130.

⁹ "Three Proofs of Realism," p. 179.

¹⁰ *Idem*, p. 179.

become objects of thought. Santayana's deep-rooted objection to interactionism and his frankly avowed epiphenomenalism would seem to forbid any compromise at this point. Although knowledge is presently to be applicable piecemeal in a world of independent objects, its origin is not to be found there except in a very vague sense, namely, that it is a phase of the flux. As a process it belongs there, but its materials are self-generated. For Santayana, to account for knowledge existentially in terms of its working materials would mean to hypostatize them, that is, to ascribe vulgar existence to what is only ideal.

Now up to this point it must be evident that Santayana is a frank subjectivist. Genetically, ideas come from within. Yet they have mental momentum and because of this, which Santayana names "intent," the ideas escape from these apparent limitations and become ideally relevant in a world of external things, that is, of actual material existences. They do not leave the mind and take up residence there; they merely apply there. In short, their function is still ideal; they are true to their nativity. This leap is "the leap of faith and of action, from the symbol actually given in sense or in thought to some ulterior existing object."¹¹ "Self-existing things may become the chosen objects of a mind that identifies and indicates them."¹² Now it is to be remembered that this is no intra-mental relation between a particular appearance and a universal; here the reference is to an actual material existence. The arguments to be offered here may be summarized in the form of a question: How does mere mental reference of ideas to things establish the external existence of things? The answer is that existence is not established, but implied. To this we may offer the objection: What proof is there to offer in support of an assertion that an idea of which I am aware refers to an object, the notion of the existence of which is nothing more than an awareness of the same kind, a concretion in existence, a mental product of the psychic flux? Since essences developed independently of existences, why are existences implied in them? In short, the genetic independence of ideas and essences from external existences would seem to have established their self-sufficiency once for all. Had external objects been the cause of the genesis of essences, the latter might properly be referred back to their causes. This the critical realist of the type of Santayana can not allow because such an admission would vitiate the value and import of his epiphenomenalism. Thought must at all costs be saved from mechanism and materialism.

¹¹ "Three Proofs of Realism," p. 183.

¹² *Idem*, p. 168.

Santayana himself is fully aware of the fact that the real issue becomes clear at this point, even though he asserts that the first step discussed above is "primary and fundamental for knowledge."¹³ He agrees in the concluding sentences of the essay that the reality of an external world, independent of experience, is in the first place an assumption, and that all proofs of realism have value only in so far as they "require and fortify" this assumption. For example: the meaning of biology disappears if we deny that organic sensations point to external things. Why isn't the child satisfied with his "sensations" of the moon if there is no real moon, he asks. First of all, this is dodging the issue. The point is not what the moon really is, but what for the child constitutes the existence of the moon. Does the child know the moon at all except in terms of his own experience of it, in terms of his own knowledge of it? Does he ever get beyond his data? Are not his organic sensations data? His experience is realistic, as Santayana himself agrees, in so far as he intuits his data, but in what other sense can it be realistic?

The logical proof advanced in this essay establishes nothing more than this intuitional character or quality of knowledge. "Events are instinctively assumed . . . but only qualities are given absolutely." Then comes the real proof. Since existence can not be ascribed to essences, it follows that "the sort of being which essences have is indefeasible: they can not lose it or change it, as things do and must if their being is existence, . . . therefore, intuition, or pure acquaintance with data, has an object whose whole reality is independent of such a perusal of it."¹⁴ The essences, too, therefore, are independent of their being intuited. We have, then, this interesting situation. Essences are intuited, but they have independent "ideal" existence. They exist in an independent logical sphere. They become objects of intuition by accident, "consequently, knowledge of essence is transitive."¹⁵ Now no idealist would especially quarrel with the antecedent of this statement, but the acceptance of the consequent would certainly hinge on further proof. If the second leap of intuition is from this ideal realm to the physical world, how is it accomplished? Some transformation certainly must be involved. What Santayana has in mind here is suggested by his description of the second leap: ". . . the leap of faith and of action from the symbol actually given in sense or in thought to some ulterior existing object."¹⁶ Here then

¹³ "Three Proofs of Realism," p. 183.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 181.

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 183.

¹⁶ *Idem.*

the leap is not ideal. It is not from a "state" to a "consciousness of some essence," but a leap from a "symbol" to an "object." Here the leap becomes truly realistic. This leap could be realistic even if there were no real external bodies, for, says Santayana, an image would have real existence if there were no external bodies, for then *it* would be the object. Now what is the situation? If symbols were "real" there would be nothing to leap to mechanistically, and if symbols are not "real" there would be nothing to leap from, mechanistically. Since Santayana himself denies thought a mechanistic character, this leap must be ideal and then it certainly could not actually reach an object. The relation would always be saltatory, as the pragmatists say.

The conclusion is evident. The assumption of the external world is gratuitous and the real end of the knowledge process is the datum which has purely ideal existence. To insist that thought would be pointless, and would devour itself, is not apropos, for Santayana himself carefully distinguishes the act of awareness from the data or essence.

The "psychological proof" acknowledges the intuitional character of the first leap and only *assumes* the existence of bodies, but does not prove their existence or establish the necessity of the assumption. Why the idealist must give up his sense of time because he refuses to accept external existence, as Santayana argues in this essay, has point only if a purely ideal appreciation of time is denied. Yet this is already implied in Santayana's conception of the flux of appearance.

Before leaving this phase of the discussion it may be interesting to examine Santayana's description of the acrobatics of thought from a more literal point of view. He himself finds in realism the freshness and sanity of scholastic common-sense. To ask whether his own logic reveals this is therefore quite apropos. His summary of his theory of knowledge in the essay referred to above is as follows: "Transitiveness in knowledge has two stages or leaps: the leap of intuition, from the state of the living organism to the consciousness of some essence; and the leap of faith and of action, from the symbol actually given in sense or in thought to some ulterior object."¹⁷ It has already been pointed out above that there is no evident connection between these two leaps. It will suffice here to call particular attention to the terms of these two propositions.

The leap from "a state of the living organism to the consciousness of some essence" may be considered a leap from one "state" to another. Although to call this a leap is somewhat of a rhetorical exaggeration—for what happens here is merely a change of one

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 183.

state of the organism into another, that is, a continuous process—the sudden transition in terms to a “symbol” from which the leap is made to an object must appear rather unexpected. There is no better illustration to be found in Santayana’s writings of the logical breach between these two steps in the knowledge process. Certainly, the last named can not in any such way be logically connected with the first. The failure to explain satisfactorily the knowledge process by means of a succession of leaps, over or through a transitive medium, would seem to suggest that critical realism is not yet “critical” enough.

II. RELEVANCE AND TRUTH

THE first part of this paper attempted to examine critically the mechanics of the knowledge process as outlined and defended by Santayana. At this point we are naturally led to a more careful examination of Santayana’s conception of relevance and truth. It must be remembered that for Santayana “consciousness is an attitude which the body assumes and which supervenes upon the body’s elements and can not be contained within them.”¹⁸ The basis of mind “lies in the body’s interest rather than in its atoms.” The metaphysical implications of these assertions will not be discussed here. What concerns us here is how thought comes to apply, how it becomes relevant, and in what its validity consists.

According to Santayana, it is “intent” which gives meaning to thought, it is “intent” which makes thought cognitive and practical. Now intent can not be finally explained and must be accepted as a mystery in the same sense that we must accept the flow of water and the gravitation of bodies. It is not a mechanical force, but an ideal pointing. By virtue of language, which is “an overflow of the physical basis of thought,” thought becomes a power in the very world from which it drew its being, and the cry of reason to be reunited with the world is answered. An examination of intent reveals essences to us, what *is* rather than what happens. Since thought is ideally relevant only, it can not be practical in a mechanistic way.

It will be seen from the above brief paraphrase of Santayana’s conception of intent that intent bridges the chasm between symbol and object, between datum and external thing, for by virtue of it thought becomes cognitive and practical. Intent is the stick by means of which the critical realist makes his second leap. Suffice it to say here that since this has already been denominated a leap of faith, no such rationalistic assistance is necessary. The insistence

¹⁸ *Reason in Science*, p. 148.

upon the epiphenomenalistic conception drives thought out of the very world from which it is derived, and intent is a confession of that. In this doctrine of intent, which is meaningless if taken realistically as Santayana would have us do, intent can have no meaning outside of the ideal realm of essences, in which case it is truly not practical in a mechanistic sense. But when it is embodied in language and thus made an agent in the physical world, its purely ideal character is denied and it becomes vulgarly mechanistic. To object that thought "supervenes" and that "language is merely an overflow of the physical basis of thought" does not destroy the power of ideas expressed in words. This doctrine is very evidently a compromise. Intent rescues the ideal character of thought; language saves its practical potency in the world. Intent bridges the chasm between datum and object, but only at the cost of the ideality of thought and the "saltatory" relation. Thought no longer "points," but it strikes out and by impact makes the wheels go 'round.

With this conflict clearly in evidence, let us examine what Santayana understands by truth and by the validity of thought. His final definition of the function of thought is very significant because it points much more clearly than does his epistemological doctrine to the general point of view which he represents. This is summarized in the assertion, "Thought organizes itself, not the world." The mind, then, has its own life, independent of external realities. This seems to fit well with the converse of this statement—that external realities have their own life independent of mind. But there are far more general assumptions contained in the first than in the second. The *Life of Reason* is a "biography of human reason," not of human life.

A preliminary question which might well be asked here is this: What is the exact relation between this activity of thought, which is refinement of the Immediate Flux, and the Absolute Flux, the great mechanistic "parade of earth and sky"? What part does the *Life of Reason* play in the greater life of the universe? Santayana's general contention is that thought supervenes on bodily processes, and that in its ideal form is given to the chaotic flux: moments are fixed, essences are developed, purposes are discerned. There is here a definite ideal or psychic realm, which has its own movement, its own purposes, its own directions. The analysis of this life and the discovery of its direction is the business of dialectic.

Now this explanation is complete in itself and could not be well attacked were it not for the fact that Santayana also recognizes a realm of physics next to the realm of discourse, and this realm of

physics reveals an empirical validity in thought in addition to the logical validity which holds good in the realm of discourse. Science may be said to be accurate if it correctly reports the direction of the flux in nature. "Its validity is of the same order as that of ordinary perception, memory, and understanding. Its test is found, like theirs, in ordinary intuition."¹⁹ But "science follows the movement of its subject matter . . . ; . . . it verifies and solves inference by reaching the fact inferred."²⁰ Now it has been pointed out above that this term, "intuition," can correctly describe only the transition from a state of mind to an act of consciousness, to an awareness of an essence; that is, it reports only the act of the mind in appropriating the contents of the Immediate Flux. As such, validity can mean nothing more than "ideal relevance," the agreement, not of thought with reality in the realistic sense, but of certain refinements of thought with the flux of raw materials. Santayana himself well expresses this: "Reason must be practical, that is, it must fit experience. . . . Speculative reason, if it is not practical, is not reason at all."²¹ The distinction implied, then, is between two phases of the psychic flux, not between a phase of the flux of mind, and a phase of the supposedly external and independent flux of nature. The confidence—one might almost say, naïveté—with which Santayana accepts the realistic hypothesis and thus thinks to save the "empirical validity" of thought is clearly brought out in statements such as these: "Logical methods of comprehension must prove themselves fitted to the natural order and affinity of facts. This natural order and affinity is something imputed to the ultimate object of thought—the reality—by the last act of judgment assuming its own truth."²² It is quite apropos to raise the question here: By what is this "last act of judgment" guided in this assumption? How does it come to accept certain constructs of the reason as true and others as purely speculative? In other words, does this ultimate reality play any part here except that of an innocent victim of hypostasis?

If it has been demonstrated that there is here no such thing as empirical validity if validity is to be taken in a realistic and representative sense, there remains nothing but logical validity. This kind of validity, then, is just as applicable to ideals as to facts in Santayana's system, and rightly so. That these two kinds of validity are but varieties of simple intuition is proved by this quotation: "Its [science's] test is found, like theirs, [*i.e.*, perception, memory,

¹⁹ *Reason in Science*, p. 37.

²⁰ *Idem*, p. 15.

²¹ *Reason in Common Sense*, p. 176.

²² *Reason in Common Sense*, pp. 180-181.

and understanding] in *actual intuition*, which sometimes consists in perception and sometimes in intent."²³ Ideals are true when they correctly present the native direction of mind, that is, when they truly express intent; as such, "the Life of Reason gives preference a direction."²⁴ But this direction is purely "ideal; . . . only by virtue of a false perspective do ideas seem to govern action." The mind seeks not to control life but to "perfect its own existence." In the ideal realm, then, as in the realm of physics, thought reports the flux and as such contributes its bit to the establishment of the end of human life, equilibrium.

The insistence upon this ideality of the reason and upon its mechanical or practical inefficacy is so frequently affirmed that occasional suggestions of a more pragmatic conception are somewhat a surprise. "Science gives the mind dominion over matter by discovering its form."²⁵ This might be interpreted as connoting ideal dominance, were it not for the fact that industrial art is defined as giving a "more propitious form to matter." Since the flux of nature was elsewhere defined as being a succession of forms, how can art of this kind which alters nature be said to be practically or mechanically ineffective? The objection is cleverly met in an article entitled, "The Efficacy of Thought."²⁶ Here Santayana's peculiar conception is thus formulated: "Thought might still be called efficacious in the only sense, not magical, in which its efficacy would be at all congruous with its intent, namely through the natural efficacy of the creature whose life it expressed."²⁷ That is to say, thought is efficacious only if it correctly reports efficacious action. Only the cerebral processes, however, are mechanically efficacious.

The first thing to be noted here is that Santayana himself hesitates to take the second leap discussed above, which would have to be a magical one in a truly mechanistic universe unless thought actually touched reality. Thought is merely the froth and foam on the surface of the flux. Although a part of nature, it is itself mechanically helpless. Secondly, it might be objected that Santayana fails to note that certain facts, true enough about thought in its genesis, are not true about thought in its maturity. Although action is purely instinctive in its first stages, a consciousness of its purpose makes it a power where it was a force. Ideas, in a certain sense, become directive in a mechanistic universe when they are conscious.

²³ *Reason in Science*, p. 37.

²⁴ *Reason in Society*, p. 151.

²⁵ *Reason in Science*, p. 29.

²⁶ This JOURNAL, Vol. III, p. 410.

²⁷ *Idem*, p. 411.

That Santayana himself accepts this view in his practical philosophy will be suggested by a consideration of his theory of art. An emphatic statement is the following: "Art is that element of the Life of Reason which consists in modifying its environment, the better to attain its end."²⁸ This is, of course, no contradiction of the thesis ascribed to Santayana if ideas are understood as having no influence in cerebral processes.

The strongest evidence of the naïveté of Santayana in the matter of his own views concerning the practical efficacy of the reason is the volume *Egotism in German Philosophy*. The central thesis of this work is that the transcendentalist vagaries and "visionary insolence" of German Idealism are to be held responsible for the war. The somewhat unusual course of reasoning followed in this volume is summarized in this statement: "Theories in their own ethical essence can have no influence on events. But the men who conceive and adopt a theory form, in doing so, certain habits of discrimination and of reaction to things. . . . The explicit theory, however, is a symbol and omen of their practical attitude."²⁹ Now what is meant here by reaction but practical activity following as a result of, and even controlled by, ideas?

If it is objected that "cerebral processes" were responsible and that ideas are merely the reports of these processes, why then blame German Idealism? If the cause was lack of organization of thought, that is, of the development of speculative ideals, then *they*, not cerebral processes, were responsible, and the Germans should be blamed for not developing better directive ideals. If not, they can be blamed for nothing more serious than their unwillingness to accept, let us say, critical realism.

In explanation of such instances of stupidity and obstinacy as this one asserted of the Germans, and of others of the same kind, Santayana suggests that the Reason, in the case of such apostasy, is lacking in docility: it is egotistical and therefore unreasonable. Since the reason is denied an active part in practical life and ascribed an "histrionic rôle" in its own sphere, its principal business is to discover and follow its cues. Only then can it hope to attain its part in the organic equilibrium.

But in what sense of the term must the reason be docile, and to what superior directing force? The most logical answer seems to be contained in these words: "Theory must revert to the Immediate Flux for its sanction, whereas dialectic is a centrifugal emanation from existence and never returns to its point of origin."³⁰ It

²⁸ *Reason in Art*, pp. 16-17.

²⁹ *Egotism in German Philosophy*, p. 162.

³⁰ *Reason in Science*, p. 78.

is clear, then, that the reason must be docile in two ways: First, in science or physics it must fit the facts as they appear in the flux. This is paraphrased by Santayana in an interestingly realistic way a few pages later: "... sense ought to correspond in articulation with the object to be represented."³¹ The only meaning this can possibly have, however, follows from the interpretation of his epistemological position as outlined above, namely, that thought must be docile to the materials given it in the Immediate Flux rather than to the objects in the external world.

But the second kind of docility is not so clearly explained. In dialectic it is the "ideal" value of the ideas that counts, and it is the purpose of science in these fields to discover "how things hang together perspicuously and how the later phases of any process fill out—as in good music—the tendency and promise of what went before."³² Here, then, ideas must be docile to "intent," intent being here interpreted as the ideal direction which thought has, this direction being embodied in the speculations of the mind which disclose and elucidate values. This can not be checked up scientifically with such a definitely revealed process of the flux as mechanism, that is, in terms of fact, since our working materials here are meanings—purposes and values rather than essences—but it must be judged from the standpoint of the equilibrium of the mind. The "practical reason" then is docile in so far as it is guided by the ideal of the mind, harmony. In refusing to recognize this docility of thought, and in substituting for it egotistical phantasies, transcendentalism and its irrational offspring fail to live the "Life of Reason." Thought becomes even more irrational when it leaps beyond itself and hypostatizes these values. Thought in the realm of values becomes most truly docile when it is most frankly sophisticated.

It must be apparent from the above discussion that truth can not involve a transitive relation which shall extend beyond the datum, for both essences and purposes are intra-experientially derived and can be said to refer to external existences only by a leap of faith. Santayana implies this when he says: "For truth at the level at which it arises means not sensible fact but valid ideation, verified hypothesis, and inevitable stable inference."³³ Since the mind's interest is to perfect its own existence, its favorite themes are not the body's relations to nature, but its own notions; it prefers to be occupied with its own problems of synthesis. Synthesis, says Santayana, is the real problem, for "the thoughts of men are

³¹ *Idem*, p. 80.

³² *Idem*, p. 171.

³³ *Reason in Common Sense*, p. 201.

incredibly evanescent, merely the foam of their labouring natures." ³⁴ We have here a definition of truth which at first glance seems definitely pragmatic: Where essences are concerned, ideation is valid if it fits the flux of perceptual experiences; where purposes are concerned, it is valid if it promotes the ultimate synthesis of meanings and values. Truth is truth if it fits the Immediate Flux and if it correctly reports the soul's constitution. It is pragmatically definable if we rule out interactionism and limit our pragmatic sanctions to purely ideal sanctions.

In this connection, note a definition of truth given in *Reason in Science*: "The hypostatized total of rational and just discourse is the truth. Its ideal consistency and permanence serve to make it a standard and background for fleeting assertion. Like the physical world, the truth is external and in the main potential. . . . What exists of truth in direct experience at any moment is infinitesimal, as what exists in nature is, but all that either contains might be represented in experience at one time or another." ³⁵ What is here implied seems to be a thoroughly idealistic conception of truth, something which Santayana himself describes as having a "static ideal constitution." Such a constitution would include both "literal" truth, that is, ideally representative essences, and "symbolic" truth, ideally representative values, but in neither case could there or would there be any escape from the intramental, that is, from ideal existence. Here as everywhere in Santayana's writings, external existences are gratuitous.

In conclusion, it seems just to summarize the definition and criticism of Santayana's epistemological position in these statements. Thought is the progressive differentiation and organization of mental contents according to laws in the mind itself and controlled by a vital directive force called intent, aiming at an ultimate synthesis and equilibrium, which is the mind's contribution to the grand equilibrium of the organism. This is a long and tedious process which might be summarized by the term "idealistic empiricism" as opposed to "idealistic absolutism." Although there is change in the universe, this change in experience is fractional, and behind and over all is truth, having a "static ideal constitution," which can not be contained *in toto* in any one experience, but which is contained potentially in experience as a whole. The realistic assumption of external realities must be judged wholly gratuitous and this aspect of his thought denominated an epistemological affectation, for if we do not do so, thought can be considered nothing but a well-intentioned but helpless being impris-

³⁴ *Reason in Science*, p. 127.

³⁵ *Reason in Science*, p. 182.

oned in a beautiful garden, whose only interest in life is to watch the course of the "real" world outside, through the bars of its prison—a pathetic, pale, emaciated, and bloodless ghost. Why the realist should be concerned about this pathetic figure at all, since real life goes on so jollily and pleasantly outside, is a mystery. And, on the other hand, why this pathetic figure should be so concerned about this gratuitous world out there, a world of imagined and hypostatized reality, a figment of an active brain, instead of being happy in this entrancing and stimulating garden of thought, is quite as much a mystery. That some kind of choice must be made is clear: either thought must be released and allowed to rejoin the "real" world, or this world must be shown to be an imaginative fiction and the heated fancy freed from occupation and concern with it. That Santayana himself makes a very real choice, a choice which involves a virtual confession of this epistemological affectation and a recantation of faith, must, I think, be clear to any one who, during the reading of the brilliant volumes of *The Life of Reason*, has observed the poet gradually turn his back upon the mechanistic and realistic universe—constructed with so much creaking of dialectical machinery—and finally take refuge in the platonic realms of "Ideal Society."

MARTEN TEN HOOR.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS.

